



Loxwood Parish Council

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Consumer Council for Water,
1st Floor Victoria Square House,
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3rd July 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Loxwood Parish, Chichester District, West Sussex - Sewerage Infrastructure

Loxwood Parish Council (LPC) is involved in reviewing planning applications that arise following applications to Chichester for development in the Parish. The Parish Council looks at the applications from a local perspective as well as considering them in accordance with the Planning Policies of the Chichester District Council Local Plan and Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan.

Over the years LPC has commented on the lack of capacity within the sewerage infrastructure to support development in the centre of the Village and surrounding areas that form the sewage infrastructure catchment area. The catchment area extends beyond Loxwood Parish into the neighbouring village of Alfold within Waverley Borough in Surrey and the neighbouring villages of Plaistow and Ifold within Chichester District.

Local residents have consistently reported overflows of sewer manhole covers and backing up into toilets in parts of the village, particularly at times of heavy rainfall. Indeed SW's solution in the past has been to weld the manhole covers shut to prevent escape of raw sewage into gardens.

Southern Water (SW) have been of the same opinion relating to capacity as far back as 2013, as you will note from the letters attached at appendix 1 and appendix 2 addressed to CDC in connection with the proposed development of Land South of Loxwood Surgery. In this case the developers of the site were informed that sewer infrastructure improvement costs necessary to allow them to connect to the main sewer network would be in excess of £500k. This resulted in the site becoming unviable. A similar situation arose with the Nursery Site, Loxwood, where the sewer infrastructure improvement requirement would have cost a similar amount, but where subsequently, with the new charging provisions set out in the Water Act 2014, this burden was alleviated from the site developer and placed with Southern Water.

However, Southern Water appear to be allowing development to proceed without upgrading the sewerage system, allowing temporary solutions to be put in place which are not being managed effectively. The Nursery site now has two underground tanks which store sewerage during times of greatest inundation of the main sewerage system, but which, when full, discharge into the main

system whatever the situation of the system at that time. The Parish Council were given to understand that the storage tanks would be emptied by tanker when full, but this is not occurring. Indeed, the developer has now left the site and there is no arrangement in place for Southern Water to adopt the maintenance of this temporary solution or to take on the cost of any such tanker use.

LPC has had several meetings with Southern Water management at a high level with their Infrastructure Planning Management and the possibility of an infrastructure upgrade has been discussed. It has been established that there are currently no provisions specifically included in the Southern Water budget for the five- year budget planning cycle commencing 2020. It was also stated by SW that it was not necessarily certain that an upgrade to the Loxwood sewer infrastructure would take place in the next round of budget planning for 2025 -2030. However, a further speculative developer, upon enquiring of SW what the position was for their development, was given the reply at appendix 3 which suggests that the infrastructure would be upgraded to accommodate their development within 24 months. This was disturbing news to those members of Southern Water attending the meetings held with the Parish Council.

Furthermore, there is a development being built-out north of the Parish boundary, in the county of Surrey, under the jurisdiction of Thames Water who, on due investigation by desk top study, have concluded that the development can connect to the main sewer system that passes down through Loxwood, as they concluded there was sufficient capacity in the system. Their exact wording being

“With regards to the development on the land west of Sweeters Copse (55 dwellings) by Carla Homes - we did initially have some concerns regarding the sewerage infrastructure capacity in the area. As a result of this we conducted an impact study (modelling assessment) in 2017 to determine whether this development could be connected to the existing foul sewer network without the requirement for any offsite sewer reinforcement works. The study concluded that there is sufficient capacity within the existing foul sewer network to accept the foul water flow, via a gravity connection, from this site”.

This is a contrary view to the statements made by SW to developers within the Loxwood Parish for the two major developments already in the system.

There are many conflicting views of the situation but local reports to the Parish Council of sewerage in gardens and backing up into houses and the frail nature of the existing system in terms of cracked inspection chambers and clay pipework which allows inundation by surface water suggests to the Council that capacity has been reached and should not be added to without an extensive upgrade to the system. The Parish council would be grateful if the Consumer Council could investigate this matter further with a view to establishing if and when an infrastructure improvement can be expected within the parish in the near future and, if not, within what timescale. We would certainly see this as an inhibitor to any further development within the parish and surrounding areas affected by the SW sewer infrastructure.

Yours faithfully

J Bromley

Jane Bromley
Clerk to Loxwood Parish Council

CC By email: MP G Keagan; CEO Chichester District Council D Shepherd; WSCC Janet Duncton; CDC Gareth Evans; CDC Mike Allgrove.

